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Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in Abyei

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 24 of Security Council resolution 2156 (2014), in which the Council requested that I continue to inform it of progress made in the implementation of the mandate of the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei (UNISFA), and to bring to its attention any serious violations of the Agreement between the Government of the Republic of the Sudan and the Sudan People's Liberation Movement on Temporary Arrangements for the Administration and Security of the Abyei Area (S/2011/384, annex), signed on 20 June 2011. In that connection, the report provides an update on the situation in Abyei and UNISFA operations since my previous report of 13 May 2014 (S/2014/336). In addition, it outlines progress made in the implementation of the additional tasks mandated to UNISFA under Security Council resolution 2024 (2011) related to the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism.

II. Security situation

2. The security situation in Abyei during the period under review was relatively calm, although the underlying conditions remained volatile and unpredictable. The presence of small arms remained prevalent among the civilian population. Between 120 and 150 Sudan oil police force personnel remained deployed in the Diffra oil complex, in violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and multiple Security Council resolutions. UNISFA observed the entry and exit of small numbers of Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) personnel in southern Abyei, also in contravention of existing agreements between the Government of the Sudan and the Government of the Republic of South Sudan.

3. During the reporting period, the Sudan oil police detained two trucks at Diffra, from 15 to 23 June, belonging to a mission contractor transporting water well-drilling equipment. The police cited a lack of valid travel permits on the part of the drivers. The incident constituted a violation of the status-of-forces agreement signed with the Government of the Sudan, which provides for the unrestricted freedom of movement of mission contractors without the need for permits. UNISFA protested the matter with authorities of the Government of the Sudan. On 12 May, UNISFA patrols sighted approximately 20 armed SPLA soldiers, several of whom were in uniform, at a roadside shop near Athony village, southern Abyei. At the urging of the UNISFA troops, the soldiers left the Area and crossed into South Sudan. On

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3 July, a UNISFA patrol to Athony village observed two unarmed SPLA soldiers in the Area. Upon sighting the UNISFA patrol, the soldiers retreated southwards.

4. Several incidents of livestock theft undermined security among the civilian population. On 25 May, UNISFA was informed by Ngok Dinka community members that approximately 10 to 15 armed men, alleged to be Misseriya youths, stole 158 goats and sheep from Dungoup village, central Abyei. UNISFA troops retrieved most of the livestock, along with abandoned ammunition and three rifle magazines approximately 10 km north of Goli town, northern Abyei. The perpetrators could not be located. On 4 June, Ngok Dinka community members reported the theft by unidentified persons of approximately 300 cattle in Rumamier village, 25 km north-east of Agok town. A UNISFA patrol located the cattle nearby and returned them to their owner.

5. On the night of 17 July, unidentified armed assailants shot dead five civilians, injured six civilians and stole approximately 800 cattle in Wunrouk (4 km south-west of Abyei town). A UNISFA patrol dispatched in response to the incident came under fire from the assailants near Nyincour (3 km west of Abyei town). The patrol returned fire. There were no casualties. UNISFA provided medical treatment and evacuated the injured civilians to the Abyei clinic. The livestock were retrieved and returned to their owners. The mission searched for, but was unable to locate, the perpetrators.

6. There were two incidents during the reporting period in which armed assailants attacked youth. On 18 May, two unidentified armed men killed two Ngok Dinka youth near Leu village, 21 km east of Abyei, in a suspected feud over attempted cattle rustling. On 13 June, unidentified assailants, three of whom were armed with AK-47 rifles, killed four Ngok Dinka youths and stole 52 cattle on the outskirts of Abyei town. UNISFA aerial and ground patrols were unable to locate the perpetrators or livestock, with poor road conditions hindering the search in some areas. The mission engaged Ngok Dinka traditional community leaders and intensified patrols in and around Abyei town to prevent an escalation of tensions. On 18 June, members of the Ngok Dinka community demonstrated peacefully in front of the UNISFA headquarters to protest the incident. In an address to the demonstrators, the UNISFA Head of Mission/Force Commander reiterated the mission's continued commitment to the protection of civilians.

7. A UNISFA patrol sighted 14 armed Misseriya men in the Abyei Area, on 12 June, in the vicinity of Luki village, 24 km north of Abyei. Upon sighting the peacekeepers, the armed men fled northwards. Subsequent patrols were unable to relocate them. On 26 June, UNISFA troops at Farouk, northern Abyei, disarmed a Misseriya pastoralist carrying an AK-47 rifle and ammunition.

8. Given the administration and rule-of-law vacuum in the Abyei Area, UNISFA continued to implement its conflict prevention and mitigation strategy, which consists of monitoring and early warning assessments, conducting day and night patrols, maintaining a disengagement area between the local communities, and the regular convening of joint security committee meetings with the traditional leaders of the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities. With the arrival of the seasonal rains, the mission commenced the implementation of its rainy season deployment plan to enable the provision of security and the protection of civilians despite the reduced mobility.

9. UNISFA police personnel continued to provide advice and support to the UNISFA Head of Mission and the military component on issues related to law and order and the protection of civilians. UNISFA police provided training in riot control and public order management to 37 mission quick reaction force officers. In addition, they continued to promote local security initiatives through the provision of support to unarmed, voluntary neighbourhood watch mechanisms and to conduct community patrols.

10. The northwards migration of nomads continued without major incident. As at 1 July, approximately 75,000 Misseriya migrants had exited the Abyei Area to the north, while another 25,000 remained slightly south of the Area's northern boundary. On 22 June, after having previously exited the Area, 30 Mezeqna pastoralists, a sub-clan of the Misseriya, returned south to the vicinity of Goli village because of delays in the arrival of seasonal rains further north.

11. The United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS) continued to conduct mine action survey, clearance and explosive ordnance disposal operations throughout the Abyei Area to improve safety for United Nations personnel, humanitarian actors and local communities. In particular, UNMAS conducted non-technical surveys in five zones in Abyei town and five villages within the Abyei territory, safely removing and destroying seven explosive remnants of war items. In addition, mine action teams conducted area clearance operations at all UNISFA sites to locate and remove potential explosive remnants of war. The mine action teams responded to two emergency tasks that led to the clearance of 143 m^2 of land and the removal of one explosive remnant of war item.

III. Political developments

12. Further to the recommendations of the recently concluded strategic review of UNISFA (see S/2014/336), which were welcomed by the Security Council in its resolution 2156 (2014), a joint delegation consisting of the UNISFA Head of Mission/Force Commander and representatives of the United Nations Secretariat and the African Union Commission started a joint series of consultations with the Governments of the Sudan and South Sudan in Khartoum and Juba, respectively, from 25 June to 2 July, to encourage the parties to take concrete steps to promote the consolidation of peace and security in Abyei. In particular, the delegation sought the parties' views on the implementation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and the Abyei Protocol of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, including through the full withdrawal of their security forces, the resumption of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings, the implementation of the previous decisions of the Committee and the organization of a joint peace conference between Misseriya and Ngok Dinka traditional leaders. The Government of Ethiopia has decided to join this engagement with both parties, which will continue until the expiry of the current mandate of UNISFA.

IV. Status of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism

13. The Government of the Republic of South Sudan informed UNISFA in writing, on 27 May 2014, of its intention to resume participation in the Joint Border

Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. This followed the withdrawal of its monitors six months earlier pending resolution of a disagreement between the Sudan and South Sudan over the location of the Safe Demilitarized Border Zone centreline. On 28 June, senior South Sudan officials informed UNISFA that their objection was not related to the centreline coordinates, but to the use of those coordinates to demarcate the agreed border corridors in disputed border areas, as it would then amount to de facto border demarcation. The Mechanism resumed operations, on 16 June, through aerial patrols of the Zone from its base in Kadugli, Southern Kordofan. There was no reported military presence or activity in the Zone.

14. The Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism initial operational capability development plan provides for the establishment of team sites in the following four locations: Gok Machar and Malakal in South Sudan and Kadugli and Buram in the Sudan. The mission has completed the construction of accommodation facilities for a force protection platoon at Gok Machar and, from 25 to 27 June, relocated troops from Kadugli. Expansion of that camp to accommodate a full force protection company and additional United Nations monitors continued. Work on the expansion of the Kadugli site to enable the accommodation of a force protection company in transit also continued. Preparations for the development of Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism sites in the other two locations are ongoing. In addition, preparation was undertaken for the commencement of Mechanism ground patrols, which requires the deployment of additional force protection elements and the clearance by United Nations demining teams of patrol routes.

15. As at 1 July, UNISFA, the Sudanese Armed Forces and SPLA had 25, 34 and 30 monitors, respectively, at the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism headquarters in Kadugli. Three UNISFA and two SPLA monitors were deployed at the Gok Machar site. Of the 117 force protection troops deployed to the Mechanism, 79 were in Kadugli and 38 in Gok Machar.

16. The entire complement of 60 dedicated Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism demining staff, and the requisite technical equipment, including 21 landmine-protected vehicles, arrived at the mission. UNMAS surveyed 357 km and cleared 129 km of priority mission routes, including the entirety of the route between Gok Machar and the UNISFA headquarters in Abyei, enabling safe movement along that axis.

V. Humanitarian situation

17. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes and their non-governmental organization partners continued to provide humanitarian assistance in the Abyei Area, including in the education, food, health, hygiene, non-food items, nutrition, sanitation and water sectors. The assistance was provided to approximately 81,000 Ngok Dinka beneficiaries. Further, humanitarian actors conducted sustained protection monitoring, in particular for internally displaced persons and returnee populations, to ensure that vulnerable households received humanitarian assistance. Despite impediments, humanitarian actors based in Abyei town provided assistance to approximately 15,000 resident Misseriya and nomads, including health, water and sanitation services.

18. In addition, humanitarian agencies pre-positioned supplies to enable effective emergency responses during the peak of the rainy season. In early July, the World

Food Programme undertook a food security and logistical assessment in the northern part of Abyei to support vulnerable populations through food distribution where required. The International Organization for Migration (IOM) continued with the implementation of rehabilitation and construction projects. This included the rehabilitation of 9 hand pumps and 2 water yards, as well as the upgrading of 10 mini water yards. IOM also completed the rehabilitation and construction of four new school classrooms at Mekenis (11 km north of Diffra, northern Abyei) and four classrooms in Rumamier (25 km north-east of Agok, southern Abyei). The World Health Organization assisted with the establishment of a health clinic in Diffra.

19. United Nations agencies, funds and programmes continued to face access challenges, especially delayed processing of travel permits from Khartoum to Abyei. Insecurity also hampered access to parts of the Area, with humanitarian actors reliant upon UNISFA for force protection in northern Abyei. In addition, the seasonal rains rendered some roads impassable. The absence of Sudanese national staff also limited programming in the northern areas. Finally, international non-governmental organizations based in Agok were not allowed by Ngok Dinka authorities to access northern Abyei.

20. As a result of the ongoing crisis in South Sudan, displaced persons continued to enter the Abyei Area. As at 1 July, there were approximately 6,500 such persons from South Sudan in the Abyei Area.

VI. Personnel deployments and mission support

21. As at 1 July, the UNISFA military component stood at 4,088 of the authorized strength of 5,326. As part of the rainy season relocation plan, UNISFA troops were moved from temporary operating bases at Noong and Dungoup to Dokura and Abyei town (central Abyei), respectively, while troops stationed at the Marial Achak operating base were moved to Banton (southern Abyei).

22. As at 1 July, the strength of the mission's police component was 22 out of an authorized strength of 50 police officers. The remaining personnel are expected to join the mission when the Abyei Police Service, which the United Nations police component is mandated to train and advise, is established.

23. The development of mission infrastructure continued. In particular, work was completed at the Tajalei temporary operating base (southern Abyei) on the relocation of 150 soldiers from tents to prefabricated hard-wall structures, the provision of an uninterrupted electricity supply and improved access to water. The mission upgraded 11 km of access roadway between Todach and Diffra (northern Abyei) and accelerated the drilling of bore holes for its field sites in southern Abyei through the provision of an extra drilling rig. The mission completed the site clearance and filling works for an airstrip at Athony, southern Abyei.

VII. Financial aspects

24. The General Assembly, by its resolution 68/258 B of 30 June 2014, appropriated the amount of $318.9 million for the maintenance of the Force for the period from 1 July 2014 to 30 June 2015.

25. As at 10 July 2014, unpaid assessed contributions to the Special Account for UNISFA amounted to $38.8 million. Total outstanding assessed contributions for all peacekeeping operations at that date amounted to $1,060.8 million.

26. Reimbursement to the contributing government for troop and contingent-owned equipment costs has been made for the period up to 31 May 2014 and 31 March 2014, respectively, in accordance with the quarterly payment schedule.

VIII. Observations

27. Despite the absence of clashes in the Abyei Area, I remain deeply concerned about the potential for a serious escalation of tensions between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya communities that could lead to an outbreak of hostilities during the upcoming migration season. In its resolution 2156 (2014), the Security Council welcomed the recommendations of the strategic review of UNISFA (see S/2014/336), the aims of which are to contribute to the consolidation of peace and security in Abyei by addressing challenges related to full and complete demilitarization, law and order, public administration and inter-community relations. The Security Council called upon the two Governments to work with the United Nations towards that goal and decided to extend the mandate of UNISFA until 15 October 2014.

28. It was on this basis that the African Union Commission, UNISFA and the United Nations Secretariat engaged the Government of the Sudan and the Government of South Sudan during the reporting period to solicit their support for the recommendations. I am grateful to the Government of Ethiopia for having agreed to join this effort. The delegation emphasized to the parties that the present arrangement whereby UNISFA is providing security in the absence of public administration and law-and-order mechanisms is ultimately unsustainable and that greater commitment is needed from them to jointly address such requirements. Practical decisions to address the current and upcoming security, political, administrative and inter-communal challenges in Abyei are urgently needed.

29. The resumption of Abyei Joint Oversight Committee meetings and the implementation of its past decisions are particularly critical, as is active cooperation to address the illegal presence of the Diffra oil police and specific steps to find closure on the assassination of the Ngok Dinka Paramount chief, promote the reduction of small arms circulation and cattle rustling, and prepare the ground for the peaceful and secure return of internally displaced persons north of Abyei town and a peaceful 2014-2015 migration across Abyei. I call on both the Sudan and South Sudan to facilitate the early conduct of a joint inter-communal peace conference between the Ngok Dinka and Misseriya traditional leadership without preconditions, which UNISFA stands ready to support. I look forward to reporting on the results of this joint engagement in the next UNISFA end-of-mandate report in September 2014.

30. Despite their assurances, both the Sudan and South Sudan continue to maintain security forces and allow the entry of armed elements into the Abyei Area. This undermines the already fragile security situation in the territory and is in violation of the Agreement of 20 June 2011 and several Security Council resolutions, including resolutions 1990 (2011) and 2046 (2012). It is imperative that both

Governments urgently take measures to redeploy all of their forces outside of the Abyei Area and prevent the entry of other armed elements.

31. The instability in locations surrounding the Abyei Area has also created tensions and volatility within the Area itself. These have been further exacerbated by the continued prevalence of small arms among communities within Abyei. Such a situation is not conducive to sustainable peace and security. The communities of Abyei and their leadership must take urgent steps to ensure that Abyei is made "weapons free", in keeping with the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee resolution of 3 May 2013.

32. With the crisis in South Sudan threatening the stability of Abyei and the increasing influx of displaced persons from South Sudan into the area, there has never been a greater need for unhindered access for humanitarian assistance, effective administration and rule-of-law mechanisms. It is crucial that both parties work towards the immediate reconvening of the Abyei Joint Oversight Committee to resume its crucial, mandated function of providing political, administrative and security oversight over the Area, on behalf of the Presidents of the Sudan and South Sudan.

33. The resumption of the Joint Border Verification and Monitoring Mechanism operations following the re-engagement of the Government of the Republic of South Sudan is very welcome. The participation of the Sudan and South Sudan in that mechanism is a positive indication of their willingness to work together towards reducing tensions along their shared border. I urge both parties to build on such cooperation to ensure the creation of conditions that support stability and sustainable development in the border region. In the light of the reactivation of the Mechanism, the deployment of additional authorized forces to UNISFA has been initiated to enable the provision of force protection.

34. In conclusion, I would like to reiterate my appreciation to the outgoing Force Commander, Lieutenant General Yohannes Tesfamariam, who has led UNISFA with distinction and whom I recently appointed as Force Commander of the United Nations Mission in South Sudan. I am also grateful to all of the women and men of UNISFA for their sustained efforts to promote peace and stability in the Abyei Area in what are often arduous and challenging conditions.